

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**South Summit High School
45 South 300 East
Kamas, Utah 84036**

November 3-4, 2005



**Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**South Summit High School
45 South 300 East
Kamas, Utah 84036**

November 3-4, 2005

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS**

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, November 3-4, 2005, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of South Summit High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Gary Twitchell is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at South Summit High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at South Summit High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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Zane Woolstenhulme	Supervisor, Transportation and Maintenance
Louise Willoughby.....	Supervisor, Elementary Education
Cathy Lewis	Supervisor, School Lunch

SOUTH SUMMIT HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Gary Twitchell Principal
Troy Coil Assistant Principal

Counseling

Clark Bayles Counselor

Support Staff

Valerie Marchant Attendance/Registrar
Melanie Mitchell Financial Secretary
Jane Herbert Secretary
Nick Wilkinson Police Dept. Liaison
Aaron Tillet Media Specialist
Stephanie Leavitt Media Center Aide
Lenore McEntire Math and Writing Aide
Billie Sue McNeil EDNET Coordinator
Jessica Crystal Special Education Aide
Julie Mitchell Special Education Aide
Penny Rockhill Special Education Aide
Diane Walker Special Education Aide

Faculty

Dave Aplanalp	Glen Jones	Kena Rydalch
Cody Bowen	Ryan McArthur	Svetlana Schoenbacher
Billie Jo Butikofer	Lenore McEntire	Liz Snyder
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Alisa Crandall	Earl McNeil	Mae Ure
Jacki Cuartas	Jerry Parker	Garry Walker
Sterling Draper	Chad Peterson	Nick Wilkinson
Brad Flinders	Nan Peterson	
Jane Herbert	Jennie Phillips	

SOUTH SUMMIT HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

South Summit High School aims to provide the best possible, holistic educational experience for all students by integrating current educational research and practices with technical and vocational resources. South Summit High School endeavors to prepare students for a wide range of post-high school, social and educational opportunities and occupations

BELIEF STATEMENTS

1. We believe the primary purpose of South Summit High School is to develop the highest possible level of academic excellence.
2. We believe the support of students, parents, teachers, administrations, and community members, is essential in achieving the mission of the school.
3. We believe there is a need for appropriate technology to enhance learning in all subjects.
4. We believe the skills gained in high school should help students become contributing citizens and responsible employees.
5. We believe learning should be life long and South Summit High School is a bridge to that fulfillment.
6. We believe punctuality, dependability, honesty, and integrity are important life skills that will be of value for students in the real world.
7. We believe extracurricular activities allow students additional opportunities to grow and develop.
8. We believe a safe, orderly, and caring environment for faculty and students is essential for optimal learning.
9. We believe a variety of teaching methods must be utilized, in the interest of students, to accommodate a variety of learning styles.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Vicci Gappmayer, Wasatch High School, Wasatch School District, Visiting Team
Co-Chairperson

Deborah Sorensen, Murray High School, Murray School District, Visiting Team
Co-Chairperson

Garry Turner, Wasatch High School, Wasatch School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

SOUTH SUMMIT SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

South Summit High School is located in Kamas, a small community in a mountain valley in northeastern Utah. Kamas is situated between the Wasatch Mountains on the west and the Uinta Mountains on the east. Students come from several small towns including Francis, Kamas, Marion, Oakley, Peoa, and Woodland. Most of the residents in this area are involved in farming and ranching. Over the last several years, however, the region has attracted people who live in the Kamas Valley but commute to work in larger towns such as Provo, Park City, or Salt Lake City.

The population of the Kamas Valley is approximately 5,300, the majority of whom are Caucasian. South Summit High School has 400 students in grades 9 through 12 and is classed as a Utah 2A high school.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

The culture of the valley is changing due to an influx of commuter residents. The area is shifting from a strictly rural to a more suburban culture centered on recreation in the local mountains and nearby ski resorts. As the culture shifts, the opinions of the newcomers regarding education sometimes clash with the views of the longtime residents.

The school is developing a stronger academic focus, since CRT and SAT test results show that students often fall below state averages in language arts and social studies. In 2004 the schedule was changed to allow 30 percent more time in English, math, science, and social studies classes. The school has increased the number of concurrent enrollment and distance learning courses. Twice as many girls (142) are enrolled in concurrent courses as boys (78). AP courses are languishing, with only 7 girls and 3 boys enrolled in those classes. The number of Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses has been dramatically reduced.

The school's average class size is very desirable, with only 19.4 students per class. Teachers' average number of students enrolled is 85. The school offers a sizable variety of extracurricular activities, considering the size of the school. A large number of students participate in sports, music, and drama. Another notable fact is that of the school's 24 National Honor Society members, 23 are girls and 1 is a boy.

Approximately six percent of the student body is receiving special education services. Approximately 14 percent of the student body qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch. Data on ethnic origins and ELL populations was insufficient.

- b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

The new administration is making an effort to collect data. The school is strongly encouraged to continue its effort to systematically collect and analyze student data to guide decisions made by the school. It is suggested that school leaders collaborate with the district to develop a data management system to efficiently collect and disaggregate pertinent data to determine which students are learning and which are not. This effort should extend to disaggregating the Iowa Basics Test, UBSCT and CRTs by content cluster and quartile (mastery, partial mastery, minimal, and near mastery) for each grade level and, if possible, by gender and ethnicity. The school should continue to track data on factors influencing learning such as trends in attendance, safe school violations, and community demographics.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- School leaders recognize the need to collect and analyze data prior to deciding what school improvement efforts to undertake. The staff should also explore possible correlations between student achievement and other factors influencing student success such as attendance, course grades, participation in school activities, etc. Some questions might include: Do we have students who regularly attend, but are not performing? Are high achieving students adequately challenged? Are students who participate in school activities more likely to achieve? Are there patterns or trends in attendance and achievement that can be attributed to certain grade level, gender, ethnicity, or subject area?
- The staff may want to consider examining the correlation between class grades and CRT scores. Are students passing classes but failing to pass state tests? Are students passing state tests, but performing poorly in class? How do we reconcile these differences? As schools move to a standards-based curriculum, assessment methods, grading systems and data collection will need to come into alignment with measuring and monitoring student learning. Student performance data should be used to make instructional decisions.
- School leaders are encouraged to develop a system to measure student progress on the three DRSLs—Communication, Character Education, and Critical Thinking. As specific tasks are defined and learning goals identified, data can be collected and trends analyzed for each DRSL.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The Visiting Team recognizes that South Summit stakeholders made an effort to analyze the school's strengths and limitations. Due to the change in administration and time constraints, the school was not able to fully engage in the self-study process. It appeared that many staff members did not fully understand the purpose and phases involved in the accreditation process.

School administrators provided the impetus and energy behind the self-study with involvement of the faculty and community members. Information was shared with the SCC from time to time, but they were not well supplied with data. In general, the data collected was minimal. Reports were condensed and some were missing. Department analyses did not follow the prescribed form and did not consider the eleven guiding questions. Focus groups were not organized to study the seven indicators of schools of quality.

The Visiting Team highly recommends that some of the staff members take advantage of the state resources for training in the new accreditation process. This would include attending and serving on future Visiting Teams, seeking the assistance of state facilitators trained in the process, and maintaining contact with members of the current Visiting Team.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The Visiting Team acknowledges the efforts made by the staff to assess the school's strengths and limitations. It is evident that the departments and focus groups took preliminary steps to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs. The Visiting Team recommends that the school revisit the process and make an in-depth analysis of the school.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

South Summit High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Character Education
2. Communication
3. Critical Thinking

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

It appears that the collaborative process to develop the school's mission and belief statements was very limited. The mission statement reflects the views of some members of the school leadership team, but it is not widely understood by the entire school community. There is an apparent gap between the mission statement and current practices. While the mission statement states the school will provide technical and vocational resources to students, many career technology classes have been eliminated.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The Visiting Team noted that the administration, staff, and parents are committed to helping students succeed. The staff and parents have initiated efforts to plan for school improvement. In general, most members of the School Community Council and the faculty believe that the school is taking steps to support academic achievement.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The school's mission and belief statements are loosely connected to the DRSLs. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff and stakeholders revisit this area and do the following:

- Align mission, beliefs, DRSLs, and rubric.
- Revise DRSLs to state a learning outcome for all students.
- Align rubric with the desired student outcome.
- Build school-wide support for implementing the DRSLs throughout the curriculum.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The faculty has taken preliminary steps to review the State Core Curriculum and align classroom instruction with the state standards. It appears that the departments work individually on curricular issues. There is little evidence of

cross-curricular collaboration. There is inconsistent alignment with the State Core in some departments, including the CTE classes, some of which do not offer state skills testing.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

Each teacher or department has chosen a DRSL to emphasize with the students. Some teachers have informally collaborated with their colleagues to develop a plan for implementing a DRSL into the curriculum. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff work more collaboratively and more formally on the DRSLs to reinforce student learning school-wide. As DRSLs are more explicitly defined, this process will be more easily accomplished.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

Teachers vary instruction and engage students in learning by using group activities and technology. Scheduling to provide a longer period once a week for each class has helped facilitate labs and other hands-on activities. There is evidence of informal sharing of teaching strategies. It is recommended that teachers meet formally in departments and in cross-curricular groups to continue to improve pedagogy.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

The Special Education Department is well staffed with qualified teachers who enjoy a small teacher-to-student ratio. Teachers were working one on one with students to meet their individual needs. Sixteen ELL students are enrolled. No disaggregated data was available to show achievement levels for ELL students and ethnic groups. South Summit recognizes a deficiency of qualified teachers to work with this population, but one teacher is working toward an ESL endorsement.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

South Summit High School has an eighth period when teachers are available and students can get extra help or make up missed or incomplete work. For students seeking additional educational opportunities, South Summit provides enrollment

in courses through distance learning, Mountainland Applied Technology Center, and the Electronic High School.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The staff of South Summit High School is beginning to look at achievement data. As they refine curriculum standards and objectives, school-wide assessments should be developed to measure student progress. The Visiting Team encourages the faculty to continue this process, and also encourages them to use data from standardized tests and classroom assessments to make curricular decisions and guide instruction. Disaggregating the data will identify who is learning and who is not.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

South Summit High School is in the process of identifying performance standards. As this effort continues, the Visiting Team encourages the staff to develop an appropriate system to measure student growth.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

It is difficult to determine the extent to which assessments are designed, developed and used in a fair and equitable manner because the assessment focus group was not organized. No report was generated, and it is unclear from our visit how assessments are designed and utilized.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The administrators at South Summit High School recognize the importance of improvement through ongoing professional development. They encourage teachers to take advantage of many professional development opportunities, and have set aside money to pay stipends as an incentive for ongoing professional development. The Visiting Team recommends that the school develop a systematic, long-term professional development plan that focuses on the achievement of the DRSLs.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

South Summit High School uses limited data in its decision-making process. The Visiting Team encourages the school to look at a wider breadth of data, rather than limiting data to national and state testing. We also encourage South Summit High School to use data at the classroom level when making decisions that influence student achievement. There is evidence that the leaders and teachers are beginning collaborative conversations. These conversations need to lead to research-based, data-driven decisions.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

South Summit High school does not have in place a comprehensive assessment system to collect, disaggregate, and disseminate information. Data is gathered and looked at by departments to facilitate instructional planning. The Visiting Team recommends that the school develop a systematic process to review instructional effectiveness and assess student learning.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

South Summit High School administrators are committed to providing a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment. They have sufficient resources and use them to promote school improvement through professional training and curriculum development. Students expressed a belief that the school has a positive climate and they feel safe at school.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

While the administration is committed to school improvement, it has had limited time to plan and allocate funds towards the achievement of the DRSLs. South Summit High School is in an enviable financial position and should be able to provide funds for professional development, technology, and curriculum development.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The administration has been proactive in empowering teachers, staff, and the Community Council to explore ways to enrich the learning at South Summit High School. They encourage participation and collaboration among all stakeholders. There is an emerging commitment from all groups to strengthening the school environment to meet the academic and social needs of the students. The Visiting Team recommends that South Summit administrators continue to collaborate with all stakeholders to promote a cohesive environment for school improvement.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The School Community Council is beginning to meet with the school leaders on a regular basis. Parents report that they feel welcome in the school and believe the administrators listen and respond to their concerns. Faculty members enjoy a culture of camaraderie and positive work relationships.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

School-based service projects have helped build ties between the school and the community at large. The local cable channel has also helped keep community members informed about school activities.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

South Summit High School's organizational structure and culture are supportive of professional development and provide many opportunities for engaging in professional growth. The Visiting Team recommends that professional development opportunities be structured toward the goals of the school, and teachers are strongly encouraged to attend.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The South Summit administrators are creating a climate for productive change and continuous improvement. The faculty has participated in many diverse professional development activities. The Visiting Team recommends moving

from a somewhat fragmented and departmentalized organization to a more collaborative system of curriculum development and instructional practice.

- c) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

Located in a rural setting, South Summit High School is a center for community activity, and patrons are actively involved in school traditions and activities. The high school is a source of community pride and interest. The administrators have established a positive rapport with parents and patrons.

- d) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

South Summit has established a functional and positive School Community Council. The Visiting Team recommends that this relationship continue.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met. South Summit High School's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is generally met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. The one assigned person for guidance at South Summit High School means a ratio of 408 students to one counselor; the standard is a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met. The school plan provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is met. The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support. A certified library media teacher provides instruction, resources, and activities to promote independent use of ideas and information.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is, by and large, met. Most professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the subjects they are assigned. Six educators are underqualified for their assignments; authorization and endorsements are in process.

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met. The administration of South Summit High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest. South Summit is to be commended on its low teacher loads.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. South Summit High School supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional interests and opportunities for learning to take place.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The Visiting Team recommends that South Summit revisit its action plan as follows:

- Focus the plan on student learning outcomes.
- Engage the entire faculty in the implementation of the DRSLs.
- Include specific, measurable student benchmarks to assess progress toward the DRSLs.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

At the present time, it appears the level of commitment is minimal because outcomes are not specifically outlined or well understood.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

The follow-up process is currently vague. The Visiting Team recommends that the school revisit the action plan.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the administration, staff, and parents for their pioneering effort in establishing a collaborative process for addressing school goals. There is evidence of a collaborative effort to understand the culture,

organization and status of the school. The profile provided some data about student achievement and enrollment in courses.

- The school is committed to providing opportunities for ongoing professional development and allocates resources accordingly. Faculty members are aware that they can take advantage of training and workshop opportunities, and are to be commended for their willingness to collaborate and share best instructional practices.
- The School Community Council is supportive of the school's efforts for improvement. Its members feel welcome in the school and believe their input is valued.
- The administrators, counselors, and faculty of South Summit High School are to be commended for sincerely caring about students and each other. The culture is accepting of all students.
- The Visiting Team commends South Summit High School for developing desired results for student learning that are applicable in all content areas. There is evidence of emerging support for incorporating these goals into instruction. A rubric to assess the DRSLs has been included in the school's report. As the rubric is aligned with specific student outcomes and implemented into the curriculum, it will be a useful tool for measuring student competency in the DRSLs.
- The Visiting Team commends South Summit High School for developing a school-wide goal to address writing in all curricular areas.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff and administration revisit their mission statement to align the statement with the current focus of the school. Consideration should be given to offering courses to that reflect the philosophy of the school.
- The Visiting Team recommends that South Summit High School do a more in-depth study of its data, including gathering and disaggregating data to determine who is learning and who is not. This data can be used to monitor and evaluate improvement efforts.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the focus groups reconvene to analyze the seven indicators of a quality school and assess their school's standing on curriculum development, instructional design, assessment systems, educational agenda, leadership for school improvement, community building, and continuous improvement.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the departments reconvene to analyze the eleven essential questions. (A copy of these questions has been provided to the administration.) Through this analysis, departments will continue the alignment of the school's curriculum to the State Core, utilize appropriate assessments, and create relevant learning opportunities for students. (This is a time-consuming but very valuable process.)
- The Visiting Team recommends that the faculty bring the DRSLs to the forefront of instruction and assessment in the classroom. It is recommended that the school develop a multi-year professional development plan that aligns with the DRSLs and addresses the needs of all students.
- The current action plan will require some revision to better focus on student learning. The whole faculty needs to engage in collective inquiry with regard to best practices in instruction and assessment.